



Press Release

For Immediate Release
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CDC Urges Travelers to Israel to Protect Themselves from Measles *Concern Raised over Americans Traveling to Israel for Passover*

As Americans travel to Israel for the Jewish holiday of Passover, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises all travelers to ensure they are protected from measles before departing, because of a measles outbreak in Israel.

Since September, more than 900 cases of measles have been reported in Israel, with about 700 cases in the cities of Jerusalem and Beit Shemesh.

The outbreak has raised concern that Americans traveling to Israel for Passover, which is celebrated April 19–27, may be exposed to measles and could become ill if they have never had measles or have not been properly vaccinated.

CDC recommends that:

- Travelers who plan to go to Israel check their immunization status and visit their doctor if they are not immune to measles or are unsure of immunity status.
- Unvaccinated travelers should get vaccinated as early as possible before leaving for Israel.
- Travelers returning from Israel should see a health care provider if they develop signs or symptoms of measles. Travelers who develop fever and other symptoms of measles while still in Israel should get prompt medical attention before returning to the United States. Contact U.S. consular services at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv or the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem for assistance in locating health care providers.
- Travelers with fever and other symptoms of measles should limit their contact with others as much as possible, to prevent the potential spread of the disease.
- Clinicians seeing a patient with fever and other symptoms of measles should ask about vaccination history and any recent international travel.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory illness spread by contact with an infected person, through coughing and sneezing. Measles virus can also remain active and contagious for up to 2 hours on infected surfaces. Symptoms include rash, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Some people with measles can also get an ear infection, diarrhea, serious lung infection, or, even more rarely, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis).

The disease can be especially severe in people who are malnourished or have a weak immune system. In the United States, most people born before 1957—or those who have had a documented case of measles, laboratory evidence of immunity, or received two doses of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine or measles vaccine—are considered immune.

Vaccination even shortly before or after exposure may prevent disease or lessen the symptoms in people who are infected with measles. Immune globulin given up to six days after exposure may prevent disease among people at high risk for complications of measles (such as pregnant women, people with weak immune systems and children).

For more information about the measles outbreak in Israel and measles precautions, please visit <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentMeasles.aspx> . For more information on general travel precautions when traveling to Israel for Passover, please visit <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentIsraelPassover.aspx> .

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